

## INDUSTRIES AND IMPLEMENTS.

281 When a skin was brought in, it was hung on a sort of tripod, and with a chisel-like flesher of buffalo-leg bone the meat was removed. Then the hide was stretched on the ground to dry. When dried, the hair and thin coat of skin on the same side were cut off with the familiar implement of bent elk-horn, always provided, in recent times, with a metal blade. To make rawhide, nothing more was done. To make dressed skin, liver, grease, and brains, boiled and mixed in the proper proportion, were rubbed or soaked into the skin and then removed with an ordinary scraper, now usually of sheet-iron or tin. Finally the skin was worked over with a rough stone or a bone. In preparing buffalo-skins for a tent, four steps were recognized: first, drying the skins; next, removing the hair; third, soaking them; and, last, scraping and working them over. Skins were softened by being drawn over a rope of buffalo-sinew.

281 When a woman had prepared enough buffalo-skins for a tent, she made a feast and invited other women who were skillful at making tents. The most expert of these fitted and tacked the skins together loosely, and the others sewed them fast. When a robe was to be embroidered, the woman who wanted to make it prepared food and invited other women to help her in her work. When the robe was finished, the man who was to receive it was called in, and it was given to him.

281 Caps of buffalo-skin were worn in winter. They were provided with flaps that were pulled down over the ears and held by a string fastened under the chin. Mittens of buffalo-skin were also used, tied together by a string which passed behind the neck. When the hunter was ready to shoot, he slipped his hands out of the mittens.

282 Simple flat unbraided ropes of rawhide were cut out of the skin in a long spiral. After having been cut, they were stretched between two sticks. In order to soften them, they were covered with manure, or tied to a horse that dragged them over the ground until they became pliable.

323 Pottery is declared to have been made formerly of clay mixed with crushed rock. Rawhide bags, drawn together at the top with a string, were also used for cooking by means of hot rocks. The often described Plains method of cooking in holes in the ground lined with rawhide was also followed.

372 When fire was struck with flint and steel, dry mushrooms were sometimes used as tinder.

411 Bows were most frequently made of cherry-wood, but sometimes of ash. Ash was harder and more elastic, but more brittle. Sinew backing was

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elk and deer, served very well, and the first three were often used for carrying water. It was said that water kept cooler and fresher much longer in these than in other types of container such as those of metal.

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Pottery had been made by the Gros Ventres in earlier times<sup>18</sup> but the only information we were able to gather thereon is contained in the following statements. Coming Daylight volunteered the most details: "They used some clay to boil their meat in. My grandmother worked it. She made a pot and told me how she did it. It was made of black mud of some kind. My grandmother took this mud and mixed some kind of grease or tallow with it and shaped the pot. While mixing the clay with the grease, she would shape it. It was smooth then. When finished it was about 18 in. high, 9 in. in diameter, the same at the top as at the bottom (straight-sided). The bottom was flat because it was put right on the fire and the coals were kind of heaped up around it when cooking with it. When my grandmother finished shaping it, she put it close to the camp fire and turned it around once in awhile so it would dry out. Then, when it was dry, she put water in it and put it on the fire to see whether it would crack. This pot didn't crack. I don't know what became of it. I never used it myself. It was undecorated. This one belonging to my grandmother is the only one I know the history of, and the only one in our family. We used the wooden dishes more than the pot. The pot was used only to cook in. Each family might have had one or two to cook in."

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Singer, who was present when Coming Daylight told about this, said she had heard of such pots, but had never used one herself. Mary Ereaux, the interpreter, commented, "In the Missouri River where they are making the dam, the mud taken out of the River, when it dries, is just like cement." When asked regarding pottery, Charles Buckman stated that he doubted that the Missouri River mud could have been used for this purpose. There is a blue clay near Hays that would be suitable for making pots—he had heard that pots were used "in the old days" but did not know how they

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<sup>18</sup> Cocking, in 1772, writes of the Gros Ventres, p. 111: "Victuals are dressed in earthen pots of their own manufacturing much in the same form as Newcastle pots, but without feet."

66 *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part I, Social Life*

323 were made. Several days later he reported that he had asked around about how pots were made, and some old-timers said that they braided sinew to the shape of pot they wished; heated white flint and pulverized it, and mixed with the blue clay from around the neighborhood of Hays. This mixture was about 6 per cent pulverized flint. The clay and pulverized rock were mixed in a mortar, pasted over the woven sinew, and baked. "It gets so hard you can't break it." Tom Bad Road, now (1948) about 70 years old told Mary Ereaux that once when he was a young boy he saw an old, old woman making a pot of "sand." The pot had dried hard, but some young fellows used it as a target for throwing stones and broke it to pieces.

554 The place of honor was at the back of the lodge, opposite the door. Here at night slept the "man of the house" and his senior  
513 wife, if he were a polygynist, the other wives and children on either  
545 side. Coming Daylight described the arrangement of her father's lodge as it was before she was sent to live with her grandmother. Her father and one wife slept at the rear, the bedding placed parallel to the door; she and her mother had their bedding to the left as one entered the lodge, and perpendicular in regard to the opening, sleeping with their heads to the rear and feet to the door; while her father's unmarried brothers were similarly placed as she and her mother, but on the opposite side of the lodge.

484 When on the move, the women were in charge of the children  
492 and impedimenta and usually traveled in a group considerably behind the men. Horses or dogs were used to draw the travois, and sometimes younger children or the sick and disabled were carried thereon. Mae Main remarked that her memory of riding on a horse travois was not a very pleasant one as she was often annoyed by the horse's tail brushing over her. Horses had to be broken to the travois and a horse owned by a man would never be so used. The horse can draw a far heavier load than a dog, but seemingly the Gros Ventres at no time had so many horses that the dog could be dispensed with altogether and the dog travois survived until very recently. At such times that horses for one reason or another were scarce, the people would be forced to cache a great deal of their surplus and to cut their lodges in half so the load would not be too great for a dog to draw.